

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 184122 TOSEC 190113

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.) PFOR, OAS

SUBJECT: BRIEFING MEMORANDUM: EL SALVADOR/HONDURAS
CONFLICT BACK IN THE OAS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM MAILLIARD THRU SHLAUDEMAM

1. A SERIES OF INCIDENTS ALONG THE SALVADOR/HONDURAS
BORDER IN RECENT WEEKS HAS RAISED FEARS THAT A REPEAT OF
THE 1969 "SOCCER WAR" COULD BE IN THE OFFING. THAT BRIEF
BUT COSTLY WAR DID GREAT DAMAGE TO CENTRAL AMERICAN INTE-
GRATION. THE OAS HELPED END THE FIGHTING UNDER THE AUSPICES
OF THE XIII MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS AND ITS COMMITTEE
OF SEVEN, WHICH HAS KEPT ABREAST OF FITFUL BILATERAL
NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE LAST SEVEN YEARS. ACTUAL MACHINERY
FOR SEPARATING BELLIGERENTS WAS SUBREGIONAL SAN JOSE
AGREEMENT OF JUNE 1970 ESTABLISHING DEMILITARIZED ZONES
AND NAMING COSTA RICA, GUATEMALA AND NICARAGUA AS GUARANTORS
OF TERMS, MOST OF WHICH HAVE NEVER BEEN FULFILED.

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2. DETERIORATION OF LAST FEW WEEKS DUE TO VARIETY OF

FACTORS, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL TO SALVADOR AND HONDURAS.
BUT BOTH GOVERNMENTS ARE SHOWING FRUSTRATION OVER FAILURE
TO REACH SETTLEMENT OF SEEMINGLY INTERMINABLE DISPUTE.
SEVERAL SHOOTING FRAYS LAST WEEK LED SALVADOR FONMIN

BORGONOVO TO APPEAR BEFORE OAS COMMITTEE OF SEVEN JULY
19 TO REPORT THAT GOES HAS REQUESTED GUARANTOR STATES
OF SAN JOSE AGREEMENT TO TAKE IMMEDIATE BUT UNSPECIFIED
ACTION TO END BORDER VIOLENCE. HONDURAN FONMIN PALMA
NEXT CABLED OAS ASKING FOR DESPATCH OF OBSERVERS TO
INVESTIGATE INCIDENTS.

3. MEANWHILE, GUARANTOR STATES ARE WORKING TO CALM
SITUATION, SO FAR UNSUCCESSFULLY, BUT WILL MEET AT FONMIN
LEVEL IN MANAGUA JULY 24 TO ASSESS PROSPECTS FOR PEACEFUL
RESOLUTION. COMMITTEE OF SEVEN YESTERDAY DECIDED TO SEND
TELEGRAM TO GOVERNMENTS OF BOTH SALVADOR AND HONDURAS
(WITH COPY TO GUARANTOR STATES) CALLING FOR GREATER
EFFORTS TO KEEP PEACE AND ANNOUNCING FORMATION OF FIVE-
MEMBER OAS SUBCOMMITTEE THAT IS PREPARED TO GO TO AREA
IF CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS BREAK DOWN. OAS AMBASSADORS OF
ARGENTINA, COSTA RICA, GUATEMALA, NICARAGUA AND US HAVE
BEEN NAMED TO SUBCOMMITTEE, TOGETHER WITH ASSISTANTS OF
THEIR CHOICE, CIVILIAN OR MILITARY. MESSAGE TO FONMINS
MAKES CLEAR THAT SUBCOMMITTEE WILL ONLY GO IF CURRENT
EFFORTS OF GUARANTOR STATES FAIL AND GOOD OFFICES OF OAS
ARE WELCOMED BY PARTIES TO DISPUTE. TELEGRAM INTENDED
TO SUPPORT EFFORTS BY GUARANTOR STATES AND TO SHOW CONCERN
OF OAS.

4. STATEMENTS BY OAS AMBASSADORS OF GUARANTOR STATES AND
CABLES FROM OUR EMBASSIES, PARTICULARLY MANAGUA, MAKE
CLEAR THAT POTENTIAL FOR NEW OUTBREAK OF SERIOUS FIGHTING
CANNOT BE DISCOUNTED. WE HAVE ALWAYS WELCOMED PEACEKEEPING
INITIATIVES BY OAS BUT ARE ANXIOUS TO EXHAUST POSSIBILITIES
OF SAN JOSE AGREEMENT FIRST. WE HAVE MADE CLEAR TO THE
COMMITTEE OF SEVEN THAT THE US WILL TAKE PART IN EFFORTS
AT CONCILIATION BUT THAT WE BELIEVE ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT
OF COMMITTEE OF SEVEN SHOULD BE CAREFULLY COORDINATED
WITH CURRENT EFFORTS OF GUARANTOR STATES. IF GUARANTOR
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STATES REQUEST DESPATCH OF OAS OBSERVERS AND GOH/GOES
AGREE, I OR US DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE WILL BE US MEMBER
OF TEAM AND WE WILL ASK PENTAGON TO PROVIDE OFFICER TO
ACCOMPANY. ALTHOUGH BOTH GOVERNMENTS HAVE MADE SOMEWHAT
BELLICOSE STATEMENTS, THEY HAVE ALSO PROMISED TO WORK FOR
PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT THROUGH DIRECT BILATERAL CONTACTS AND
ALSO TO RESORT TO INTER-AMERICAN MACHINERY.

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